

DEATH VALLEY DRIVER VIDEO REVIEW #106!

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The DEATH VALLEY PLAYBOYS make up for last weeks debacle bringing the wrestling reviews that you the gentle reader ache for deep in your soul. I would like to introduce you to SWWEFFFFFFEEEEEEEEET MEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE.....

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@#@#@#@#@#@# NEW NOW! APRIL 1999- PART TWO! (DEAN RASMUSSEN!)

(After a couple weeks of vacation and totally fucking up DVDVR 105, I finally get to finish my DESCENT INTO JAPANESE INDIE SLEAZE. It's caking up on me- the crud, that is.)

Ya know, I went to Canada last week.

Tarzan Goto / Freddy Krueger VS. Shoji Nakamaki / Thunder (Bardbedwire BoardDeathmatch):

I have always had a fascination with Canada. I think it springs from growing up in the Air Force and always making friends from other cultures- my best friend ever as a child was Mike from Germany. His Grandmother was from France and would send him untranslated Asterix Comix. I remember being eight and Mike being nine and both of us pretending we were in the Monkees or having elaborate Kung Fu battles or playing Kull and Conan long before they were popular comics (we were mid-seventies pre-pubescent SciFi dinks). I remember walking with Mike to the Ft Eustis Bus Station every second Wednesday of every month to get the new CRACKED magazine. Mike was into Mad also but MAD had too much cursing in it, so I didn't want to risk offending my Southern Baptist Mother. Plus Mad seemed to be for older kids and Cracked was more fun back then. My friendship with Mike showed me a different outlook because he was raised by his French mother and his estranged German father (he had a mean as hell shithead Ohio step-father who I still want to kill to this day for all the shit he put his ten year old son through). The other influence on my world outlook at an early age was the fact that my father was first generation stateside from Hawaii and his entire family came over to join him after a while. My uncle Doug lived near us for most of the time we were in Virginia and he and his wife- who was from the Philippines- raised their kids in a very Asian/Hawaiian/Filipino way- which is to say that the Filipino aspect in my cousins' upbringing was replaced by a very strong Southern Baptist North Carolinian upbringing in me and my brothers and sister. I was always fascinated by the stuff my cousins were into- it was all very Asian stuff: Martial Arts, wrestling, ELVIS LIKE YOU WOULD NOT BELIEVE, Japanese Sci-Fi, loads of Bruce Lee. It was a totally different world, but it was kinda my world because my cousins were just slightly less removed from our shared freaky heritage- but I was never encouraged to revel in it like my cousins were. It made me feel special to experience these things and really framed my outlook for the rest of my life and made me feel like less of a normal white boy from Virginia and more of Good Freak- which is what I've always tried to become. Okay. Now that I've purged my mind of the horror that was this pathetic match, let's just say that the brawling was listless, the spots were uninspired and crappy, the blood was not really related from any spots of note, Nakamaki sucked in it, and if I never see Tarzan Scroto's fat useless ass wrestling again it will be too motherfucking soon. The end was as horrendous as the shittiness of the rest of the match.

Shinobu Kandori / Junkyo Yagi VS. Eagle Sawai / Sayori Okino: Kandori and Yagi save this mutha (surprise! surprise! surprise!) as Sawai has always been one of the more useless Joshi

Puroresu Delta Burkes. Kandori and Yagi make up for the poopiness of Eagle by getting mileage out of the exotically attractive Okino- who makes with the weapons like a less overrated Yasha Kurenai. Yagi makes Okino look totally Goddesslike by taking a straight right Right In The Face like a distaff Ikeda Diasuke. Kandori sells for everyone, as she attempts to recreate her legend like the amazing Lioness Asuka has the last couple of years. Unfortunately, Kandori is saddled with the crappy AJW as a interpromotional partner so she won't be able to join the legend-making GAEA/ J'd/OZ god-head of inter-promotional incredulosity; though Kandori carrying The Louie Anderson of Joshi-- Kyoko Inoue - to a Lioness-level Miracle Match may do just as much good as the Lioness vs Kyoko matches did for making people realize again that Lioness motherfuckuing RULES IT. Kandori in this match looks a lot like Lioness does when dealing with her youngsters that she is trying to get over: en lieu of selling like Manami Toyota would for Momoe Nakanishi, she instead opts for selling more like Aja would sell for Meiko Satomura- which is why Meiko, Sakai and Okino have a chance in hell of being great and over as wrestlers, while Momoe is gonna be another Chapparita ASARI.

Tenryu / Kendo Nagasaki / Masaki Mochizuki VS. Yoshiaki Fujiwara / Takashi Okamura/ Nobutaku Araya: I've always had a fascination with Canada. I remember my friend Micheal Loving getting some Adidas from Canada and I thought they were coolest shoes ever made and I figured that since they were made in Canada, Canada must be this cool place (littel knowing that 9 year olds in Costa Rico probably made them). When I was twelve, I got into comics a whole lot and this was when the NEW X-MEN came out and of course Wolverine was Canadian so you start thinking everything in Canada is as cool as Wolverine and Alpha Flight. For some reason, Captain Canuck was also available in the Tidewater, VA area and I would read those whenever I could get them- the artwork was very John Byrne-esque and the stories were all set in the expansive True North and it was quite fascinating to think such a cool place existed so close to the united states. From there, I tried to get into Cerebus and then I got into Rush and SCTV. It think what sealed my fascination is when the NFL went on strike in 1982 and CBS started showing CFL games in the place of NFL games. My little brother and I got WAAAY into it, what with Condredge Hollaway and Joe 747 Addams at quartback, the cool-ass helmets, the weird rules, it's no mystery as to why it was so fascinating and exotic. I think the fact that we were all hipped to the fact that Canada had it's own set of heroes in football was quite eye-opening to our young minds. It was quite mind-expanding- like the first time I saw Hiroshi Hase wrestle the Steiners on that New Japan Supershow Clash and noticed that Japan had wrestlers that were a lot of the time better than we have and they are truly beloved by their own culture- a culture that loved them outside of the confines of my own world. All this gave me a healthy world view and I was stoked to finally get to Canada for an extended stay last week. It was all I had hoped for and more. As for this match, Tenryu doesn't work stiff against Fujiwara since Fujiwara might break in half from extensive fossilization (he was Charlemagne's favorite wrestler. He would buy him mutton and mead after matches.) Kendo Nagasaki supplies the cobwebs as this is the oldest bunch of farts ever assembled in a main event. The one redeeming factor was that Nagasaki hits a great Pile-Driver for the finish. Otherwise PEEE-YOOO!

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&*~&*~&*~&*~ BADGER STATE WRESTLING - 7/24/99 (PHIL RIPPA!)

Well after skimming through an entire tape of this little Indy federation from Wisconsin, I decided to review the first card on the tape. Therefore you are treated to Badger State Wrestling coming from the Lebanon Fireman's Picnic.

Psycho Surfer vs. Angel Armoni: This was sooooo Wrestling 101 from the local community college. You have seen all this before preformed by much better wrestlers. Psycho Surfer is about 8th in the Top 10 guys who have used the Surfer gimmick. Angel Armoni is just some guy who is accompanied by his tag team partner Agador Armoni. There is the usual playing to the crowd, distracting the ref, lots of heel miscommunication, yadda, yadda, yadda. Psycho Surfer wins and then goes off and harasses some children.

Tiny Farley vs. San Antonio Smasher: I have a couple of problems with Mr. Smasher. Point 1) He comes out wearing a plain white mask and black tights. He ways about 43 pounds so the "tights" hang off of him. And the white mask is really annoying. Would it have killed him to send \$20 bucks to Highspots and get a real mask? Point 2) Smasher tries to get the cheap heat by insulting the hometown's sports teams. He rambles on about the Dallas Cowboys. Now if you claim to be from San Antonio, why don't you go on about the fact that the Spurs won the Title while the Bucks will never advance past the first round of the playoffs especially with George Karl. Anyway, Tiny Farley is one of those fat guys who like to call himself Tiny. Of course he reminds me that lycra is a RIGHT not a PRIVILEGE. I really want to know what the fine, upstanding firemen of Wisconsin did to be subjected to this match but for their sake I hope they were off getting a hamburger or something. Tiny wins with something I don't remember.

Billy Ray vs. Freight Train: The parade of beefy gentleman continues. Billy Ray lip-synchs a country song much to kill some time as so Freight Train can finish off that last Red Dog. Freight Train's MOVESET is as follows: The Slowest Big Splash in the corner and pulling his pants up. (For all of those who think I am being sarcastic I dare you to watch this match.) "Shooter" Billy Ray tries a something that looked a little like a Fujiwara armbar but the handheld was far away and the was a big batch of girth in the ring. You try to distinguish where the folds of flab stop and appendages begin.

My match list says that there are two Chaz Kildare matches next. I don't remember either one. I don't know if maybe they weren't on the tape if I just forgot them. Oh well. It is time for Judge Jesse.

Judge Jesse vs. Mr. Hollywood: Judge Jesse comes out in the full judicial robe and wig and then gets heat from the crowd by telling them all they should be in jail. I get pissed because the handheld suddenly cuts out and then joins the match in progress. So all I see is Judge Jesse jumping off the 15 foot high balcony. Well at least I know Judge Jesse is insane. I want answers as to where the rest of this match went.

Climatic Cage vs. Stealth Suicide

These two go 30 minute BROADWAY!!!! I am telling this straight out because I couldn't believe that they had the balls to go BROADWAY at the picnic show. Hey, he's 30 minutes of wrestling.

Learn to love it kid. Far and away the best match of the card and probably the best match of the tape. Climatic Cage does a Will Smith from Wild, Wild, West thing AKA Black Cowboy. He is joined by Juicy Johnny and some white girl who the cameraman likes to zoom in on. Stealth Suicide is grudge wrestler #449 and he doesn't kill himself enough for a person named Suicide but he looks like he could have a future. These guys weren't ready to go 30 minutes. There was a huge amount of stalling to start and you could already sense that they were going to try to go awhile. The last 10 minutes consists of a whole lot recovering from spots because both are blown up. I will give them credit because they tried to build to the big time limit tense sequence and there was an attempt to apply psychology and tell a story. It was just a problem of not being ready for prime time so to speak. Suicide does try to kill himself by also jumping off the balcony railing to the floor so I take back some of the not killing himself comment. I am probably being a little harsh on the fellows because when I have seen the Hardys wrestler each other for 30 minutes at an Indy show I tend to want to believe that everyone can recreate that magic.

The Ninja Assassins vs. Juicy Johnny/Koko B. Ware - Tag Title Match

Yes, it is that Koko B. Ware. So now while Koko has had problems getting work recently he certainly hasn't had problems finding the All You Can Eat buffets. He is an easy 100 pounds heavy from when I last saw him. He is not wearing the High Energy pants. He broke them out for the match where he and Johnny won the titles. (On a side note, I have no idea why Johnny isn't teaming with his regular partner Climatic Cage. I missed that story but of course this is Indy wrestling and stories come and go at the drop of a hat.) This is a weird match as it is pretty much a big brawl and it is a glorified squash for Ware and Johnny. Nothing good actually happens. Not even Koko killing someone with a Brainbuster. Sigh.

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!@!@!@!@!@ Michinoku Pro TV- JULY 1999- (PHIL SCHNEIDER!)

Great Sasuke v. Dirt Bike Kid: This was a Mask tourney match with the prohibitive favorite Great Sasuke going against scrawny Englishman Dirt Bike. The Kid was sporting the swank BMX gear with the mouth guard subbing for a mask. This match was of Jakked length, with Dirt Bike hitting an ring apron over the ringpost tope-con-hilo, and a rana, before Sasuke hit some kicks and slapped on a

face lock, for the two minute tap out. I don't know why they showed this match as it was nothing special. Dirt Bike Kid had the best outfit of the tourney though.

Gran Naniwa v. Tiger Mask IV: Naniwa is sporting the nouveau blue and white digs for this match. This was a fine wrestling match, probably the best post leg injury singles match Naniwa has had, although it was missing the special spark which would elevate it to classic status. The meat of the match had Tiger Mask work on Naniwa's arm, which Naniwa injured by missing a running lariat and smacking the ringpost. Tiger Mask broke out a lot of the shoot stuff he has been doing lately, along with a bunch of Tiger Mask moves (Tiger suplex, head and neck snap suplex, Tiger Driver, fake into a pescada) The work was brisk and the moves were well executed, although nothing really stuck out as special. Naniwa gets the win, after escaping a bunch of arm submissions, by hitting a rotation powerbomb, and a half assed Emerald Erosion.

Mask Tourney Highlights

They showed a bunch of clips, with the highlights being Doc Chan's run up the wall into a moonsault and top rope springboard spinning DDT, and Naniwa frying his shoulder after botching a super-frankentiener

Doc Chan + White Bear + Gran Hamada v. Black Warrior + Curry Man + Chapinger: This match wasn't nearly as great as it should have been. White Bear (Moetgi ? Flying Kid Ichihara?) and ? (Ryuji Yamakawa? Masaru Seno? Sad Genius?) are both Mask League creations, and they both stink. Gran Hamada and Black Warrior both usually rule, but they mailed this sucker in. The match was then left in the hands of Curry Man (Indy kingpin Christopher Daniels) and Doc Chan (British highspot maven Jody Fleish). Daniels is a great worker, and his work in this match was fine, but he is saddled with the worst outfit in the history of guys putting on tights and pretending to fight. I mean this Curry Man gimmick is horrific, he has banana yellow tights and mask with a plate of curry balanced on top of his head, words really can't describe how stupid this looks. This isn't even bad in a good way (ie Chivas Ryadas' Goat Masks, Ape Virgin) but just plain bad. Doc Chan has an equally bad, but more offensive mask. His mask is in the style of minstrels or Little Black Sambo, with a black face, white eyes and red lips in a perpetual look of surprise. It is in tremendous bad taste, and is a look into the ugly side of a beautiful culture. The Chan sections of the match were pretty choice, as Doc is a sort of Bangers and Mash Papi Chulo with some off-the-hook highspots, although his inter-highspot work ain't that great. Chan did hit the greatest highspot I have ever seen, a springboard shooting star press to the floor, which was fucking unconscious, the height and rotation were amazing, and made the match memorable at least. Curry Man won with the Spicy Drop (which is a running Burning Hammer, although the neck bump isn't as nasty), to climax a hot ending. The last three minutes were pretty good, the Chan SSP was incredible, and the rest was quite forgettable

TAKA Michinoku + Ikudo Hidaka v. Shiima Nobunaga + Sumo Fuji: Hidaka is one half of the Japanese Midnight Rockers with Minoru Fujita, but he plays Shoichi Funaki in this match, as TAKA and Hidaka (It rhymes, TAKA and HIDAKA) do all the Dream Warriors double teams, while Shiima and Sumo break out all the CRAZY MAX double teams we know and love. The match was good, but short and seemed more like a way to set up the two singles matches later in the show, I was digging TAKA and Hidaka as a team, and CRAZY MAX is always fun. Hidaka does the expected job.

Shiima Nobunaga v. Ikuto Hidaka: These two are a pair of up and coming stars in Japanese wrestling. Shiima has had the higher profile, but Hidaka may be an even better worker. This match was mostly Nobunaga, although Hidaka did break out the fucking awesome rolling northern lights suplexes. Shiima took control though and hit his quakendriver -frog splash combo for the win. The stuff in this match was pretty choice, although it was mostly a Nobunanga squash match. I would have been more into a long competitive match. In three years this could be a MOTYC, but in 1999 with their various profiles, it was just pretty good.

TAKA Michinoku v. Sumo Fuji: There are a lot of things that make TAKA Michinoku a great wrestler, he has got a tremendous workrate, he has got some top drawer highspots, he has a great dickish demeanor, but I think his strongest asset is his selling ability. This match is a clinic on how to properly sell a leg. Fuji works

him over, and TAKA lets the leg injury effect every movement he makes. He still hits all of his highspots, including a great super quebrada on a pesky Shiima Nobunaga, but he does all of the moves with a limp. This style allows a wrestler to craft a compelling match with an opponent with a limited offense like Sumo. I dug this a lot, and really appreciated the artistry involved, I am pretty happy TAKA can spend the majority of his time in Japan now where he can really show his wares.

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^&^&^&^&^&^&^&^ BIG JAPAN- APRIL 1999 (DEAN RASMUSSEN!)

Chiharu Nakano VS. Miyuki Fujii: I've always been fascinated by Canada. While I was in Canada last week, Curling actually came on TV and Ollie and I got WAAAAAAAAAAAAAY too into it. Winnipeg was playing the Danish national team and my SANGRE from Denmark were RULING IT because they all had this look on thier faces of seeing the true horror within their own souls like a good Scandinavian will. It was like the cast of Bergman's HOUR OF THE WOLF were on a night on the town playing a friendly game of Curling and shots of Jagermeister. The Winnipeg team was much more peppy, resembling a Chi-Chi's wait staff. Denmark beat them into the ground with grim, loveless determination. I won fifty cents Canadian from Ollie- what with our illegal wagering and all. Curling is actually pretty cool to watch because it's all about geometry and strategy and... sweeping. Kinda like Bowling, Billiards and your mom cleaning the kitchen all combined into a national pastime. NEATO! Anyway, this match was basically a bunch of clips of a feud that was all very indie in its crappy scope and none of it was very good. Fuji needs a sammich in a very big way.

Ryuji Yamakawa / Kamikaze VS. Masayoshi Motegi / Shunme Matsuzaki: NOTHING says INDIE more than Motegi. He is quite the Rockin Rebel of Japan- you know, not actually great or anything, but he tries real hard and has a good match when in with anyone at all- what with him being so totally immersed in real lowgrade Early nineties Junior style with an amazingly poorman's Team No Respect/TEAM SASUKE vibe going with Shadow Winger as a bottomfeeder feeding crappy heel stable. Yamakawa is a different total embodiment of Japanese indie- in that he is all that is good in Japan Indie World to varying degrees: He's a GREAT garbage wrestler, He's a good straight Puroresu wrestler, he's credible in BattlARTS version of Amazingly Stiff Pro-Style, can feign Lucharesu and is SOOOOO coated in sleaziness that you HAVE to love him. Kamikaze is the greatest high-flyer to look like a Trucker in line at a Kountry Kitchen All-You-Care-To-Eat Buffet. Matsuzaki is generic Dream Factory shmoe. Motegi and Matsuzaki spend most of the match working over Yamazaki in very yawn-inducing generic heel fashion and then Kamikaze hits all of AMAZING FATBOY! highspots and it suddenly it's all worthwhile.

Fantastik VS. Shadow Winger (Big Japan Jr. Heavyweight Title Match): Shadow Winger is SO not the worst wrestler on earth and actual hangs with 24/7 luchadore Fantastik pretty well.

Fantastik is really weird. He's kinda like a great luchadore that went to seed before he got his big break- and though he is really filled with everything you look for a great luchadore, he has ended up being in a feud with Shadow Winger in a half-assed Japanese Indie- as opposed to taking Mascara Sagrada Jr's mask in AAA or something. Fantastik does his usually great stuff- like his toprope somersault Senton to the floor that he makes SUPERNASTY by getting a full running start before crushing Winger's soul like a bug- and he does his cool ass large guy Mortals that rule. There is a very cool section where the ever-improving Shadow Winger and Fantastik have this exchange of La Majistral variations and other roll-ups to hit the finish- where you can actually force yourself to figure out which Dos Caras match and which Ultimo Dragon match and which Villano 3 match each variation was lifted from, so it was fun. This was pretty good- kinda like an actual match as opposed to the usual Hot Flying Death Parade that one associates with a usual Fantastik match.

Abdullah the Butcher VS. Mens Teoh: This was just horrible. Abby's Man-and-back-boobies used to be kinda funny, now they are just big flapping masses of hideous nightmare fuel. Men's does a Terry Funk impersonation by flopping around en lieu of selling normally and then he blades his ear and one wonders how this match and real and loving god can co-exist. I feel the urge to blow chunks on my whip ass Florsheims and so will you.

Shadow WX / Tomoai Honma VS. Daikokubo Benkie / Abby Jr. Kobayashi: Honma is now using huge spraying bladejobs like other wrestlers use headlocks. This wasn't a death match or anything, but Honma is in Full Chigusa by the fourth minute of the match for no apparent reason. Well, he goes head first into an aluminum ladder but you know what I mean. Kobayashi is one of the best unheralded wrestlers in the Japan Indie World: He's good at selling, he's got a good lumbering fatguy offense fully-equipped with Death-arific Dangerous suplexes, he's a blade/bump freak so he can go with the best garbage guys like Honma here, he can work with the highflying lucharesu guys like Honma here, he looks credible with the Quasi-BattlARTsian guys like Honma here- he's quite the shining star of the Nouveau Puerto Rican Pro Style that Big Japan offered up as their In-house style when Kendo Nagasaki trained all these guys. He's rock-solid and he is what makes this match as good as it was as he gets the most Actual Wrestling Match mileage that anyone has gotten out of Honma since the last time Honma popped up in BattlARTS. Benkie is quite the older, unlegendary version of Masa Saito- hitting the old school back suplex that Honma Benois into something all high-angle and dangerous looking. Honma and Shadow beat the hell out of Kobayashi with chairs until young unheralded Abby Jr gets on the offense by rydeen bombing Honma through one of them unbreakable Japanese tables. Abby Jr takes a goofy in a fun (as opposed to insane) way off the ladder to set up Honma's big diving headbutt off the ladder and this was quite a-okay. I really dig Honma for a lot of reasons- in that he is a Differently Geared Yamakawa- in that both are GREAT garbage wrestlers, Honma is better at BattlARTSia and Yamakawa is better at normal puroresu- but both are immersed in all the current realms of thought in the Japanese wrestling subculture. Farking Schneider was first to the Yamakawa/Honma True DeathMatch Of Fudge that Big Japan doled out in June and I'll be bringing that mutha to these pages the moment it arrives. In the mean time, this quite adequate tagteam wrestling featuring two guys

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Tony Jones vs Vic Grimes- ALL PRO WRESTLING 10/31/97- (DEAN RASMUSSEN) : This is from the big wad of APW that Boston Idol graced us with (HAIL IDOL!) and THIS is a good little match. Tony Jones is like Venom was in OMEGA- a super cool-ass worker who was overshadowed by two flashier wrestlers with more pub (Modest and O'grady to Joey Abs' Hardy Boys). Here, the solid, technically sound heavyweight Jones creates quite a match with the portly and workarific Vic Grimes. Grimes goes into total Vader mode by doing lots of AMAZING FATBOY offense which he augments with MAN-SIZED bumping and a heaping portion of

stiffness that Jones handles like a man. It starts on the mat where Jones looks very credible, while Grimes looks just as credible hitting the big lumbering takedowns- with Jones countering out and around and floating over into armbars and what have you. Jones and Grimes then raise the stiffness bar by beating the hell out of each other with straight shots and kicks for a few minutes- a section of the match that Jones finishes off with a cool Vader-esque looking quietly assisted Belly-to-Belly suplex on the rotund Grimes- showing the strength of Jones and the smartness and nimbleness of Grimes. The Vader the Younger comparison continues as Grimes hits a truly impressive toprope Shoulder block when he- catlike- takes to the air as they take a foray into brawling into the crowd for a bit. As they get back in, Jones hits a SWANK Released German that Grimes takes like a motherfucking KING- crushing his own vertebrae as he folds over himself at an impossible angle. Grimes makes a flash pin after shooting Jones into the ropes and mutating a Quebradora into a Reverse Powerbomb- in a pre-KANYON prototypical Canyon move. This match wasn't very long, but it had a lot of neat components that all worked on an Abbreviated Match Length scale. I like Tony Jones a lot just because he works a good match, has cool suplexes, has good size and will bump. He was the one I was most impressed with on this eight hour tape. This was also the first non-garbage/WWF match I've seen Grimes and he looked fricking great- as he wasn't an overgrown cruiser like the differently impressive large guy Don Montoya and he wasn't lumbering oaf like every other morbidly obese fat guy in the indies. he wrestled like a superheavyweight but didn't suck like most superheavyweights. More next week.

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YOUR WRESTLER OF THE WEEK AGAIN!!: BARRY WINDHAM! NON-JACKED and UNABRIDGED!

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NWA World Tag Team Title Tournament : Barry Windham/Dustin Rhodes v. Hiroshi Hase/Shinya Hashimoto : (REV RAY! DUFFY!) You know, Hashimoto just isn't nearly as cool without his Elvis sideburns. Laugh as Jesse Ventura and Jim Ross suggest that Hashimoto could be a good pulling guard. Hash and Hase control early. The focus on the arms seem to be the order for both teams early.

Hashimoto slaps on a triangle scissors lock and dumbs it down a little before slapping on the armbar on Windham. At one point, Hashimoto challenges Rhodes to fight and gets dropped with jabs and the bionic elbow. Hashimoto answers with a jab to the throat and follows it up with his spinning heel kick and looks like it gets all eye socket on Rhodes. They follow it up with a spiked piledriver. Rhodes tries to fight back with elbows, but Hase drops him with a chop. Windham comes in to break up a double team, but the NJPW team continues to control. Hase hits an overhead belly to belly, but takes too long going for a double knee from the top and allows Rhodes to make the hot tag to Windham. Windham works both men down with punches. He slaps the abdominal stretch on Hase and works on his ribs.

Hashimoto comes in for the save, but Windham decks him. They get a 4 man brawl. Hase gets whipped to the ropes by Rhodes who leap frogs him and runs right into a Windham flying lariat and Windham gets the pin. It was kind of short, but still a pretty cool match. Considering it was the second match each team had that night and Windham/Rhodes were going to follow it up with Doc and Gordy.

WCW- Barry Windham/ Dustin Rhodes vs. Steve Austin & Larry Zbysko- 2/29/92- (DEAN RASMUSSEN): The Barry Windham Phenomenon in the 80's was weird. I remember having conversations with fellow NWA fans (the first TRUE smarts) back in the day and thinking that it was strange that people would say, "It's about time for Windham to take the belt." I remember thinking that Windham in that framework wasn't right: He couldn't talk like Ric Flair- hell, he was worse than Luger on the STICK! and Windham didn't have the Rube-arific body that would make Lexy look legit. It was at this point that I realized that the wrestling business in the US sucks and was ruined, because Windham would never be able to get over to the point necessary to be the man, even though he was OBVIOUSLY better than Luger and (YEESH!) Sting. Windham was the coolest Horseman because his turn was the best- HELL!- it was the most logical turn in NWA history- and he wrestled like a motherfucker- as opposed to Horsemen that usually had his SPOT! I think the fact that Windham only got the NWA title after it had become a glorified Western Heritage title is another sign of the rube-ification of wrestling that transformed the artform of wrestling into the joke it now is in the US for the most part. But anyway, Barry is fucking KING-SIZED in this as he and fellow KING-SIZED worker- Dustin Rhodes- light a fire under Grampa Zbysko's big fat ass and fires Larry up enough to make Larry the THIRD best worker in this match- somehow outbumping and outworking a completely healthy Steve Austin who was still in the super-worker mode of career. Barry is great in the beginning because he carries the match with his TRULY beautiful offence, which was chock-full of REAL Lariats and cool-ass old school suplexes and some of his really neat stylized punches. Barry carries the second section of the match by bumping like a FREAK- going throat first on the guardrail from the apron a year or so before Pillman made it a staple of US wrestling. Windham carries the ending by feigning a Superplex that Austin pushes out of before Windham whips out the top rope Lariat to take this baby home. I'm not sure if this is more depressing because Windham hadn't pissed his career away yet and looked great and should have been so much more, or if it's more depressing to see Dustin Rhodes wrestling like a motherfucker before he gets screwed by WCW in the hideous match with Darsow, becomes a joke in the WWF and becomes as fat as his fat non-working father.

Barry Windham vs. Dick Murdoch - WWF Early 80's- (PHIL RIPPA): This was on the same tape that had that Murdoch/Adonis vs. Briscos match that Dean did a couple weeks ago. Dean, the complete and utter moron that he is, didn't keep watching the tape and a few matches later was this gem. Murdoch is still in full force and Windham was young and great. This match is boss because it is Murdoch gets up in Windham's face and tells him, "Listen boy, I'm still the toughest SOB in the land." Windham responds, "Mr. Murdoch, sir, you're my favorite wrestler. I'm idolized you when I was growing up. My dad stunk. I want to be like you." Then you get to watch as Windham becomes Dick Murdochcito. Every stiff elbow, Windham matches. Every goofy facial expression, Windham matches. Windham also takes it into the next generation by bumping like a fiend as Murdoch waffles him. The highlight is when, Windham sells a punch by toppling backwards over the ropes. He lands headfirst on the ring apron and just stays there for a moment. I was like, "that's gonna leave a mark". Murdoch is choice in this match too. He sells an abdominal stretch like he was dying. He spits all over himself selling a post shot. He also gets all dickish and pummels Windham with a crutch that he stole from a guy at ringside.

Windham wins a he rolls through on a Murdoch slam. Murdoch is suitable pissed, grabs the microphone (which is conveniently still on) and jabs it into Windham's head. The resounding thump is worth watching this match alone.

NWA- Barry Windham + Ric Flair v. Midnight Express-12/7/88- (SCHNEIDER). This match was the main event for the Clash of the Champions 4, and was a damn good old school tag match. Barry was rad in this match when he was in, bumping like a freak for the Midnights, including a real goofy Harley Race

cum Jerry Estrada bump over the top rope, and a nasty looking missed top rope elbow drop. We also got a nice powerslam, and a hanging vertical suplex from big Barry (no claw though, even though he was wearing the black glove, I have always been a claw mark) Windham was also a heck of a striker, as his punches looked really good. The money match up in this match was Eaton v. Flair though, as they worked most of the match together and looked great. There was a point when they were exchanging Eaton punches and Flair chops, that was off the hook. The other thing I noticed in this match, that I didn't notice during all the NWA I watched when I was 13, is that Stan Lane kind of sucks. Bobby Eaton was such a kingsized worker that you could overlook the fact that Lane was Glacier with out the contact lenses. He was all mediocre kicks, and leapfrogs, but Bobby Eaton carried the whole shebang. Goofy NWA ending with J.J. Dillon and other assorted nonsense took the bloom off the rose a bit, but it was still a heck of a match.

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NEXT WEEK: FINALLY- AKIRA HOKUTO.

THE DEATH VALLEY PLAYBOYS.

six fists in the face of wrestling

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Lord knows that I'm not

Exactly the boy of my own dreams

And if I were a girl with dreams

I'd have dreams as big as you please

-GAME THEORY